

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 VO-05 SS-15 NSCE-00
ICAE-00 FDRE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
DODE-00 L-03 CA-01 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /069 W
-----007216 031348Z /46

O R 031207Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4073
AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY IANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
INS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 12853

MANILA PASS VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY (FOR HOLBROOKE/OAKLEY)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, TH
SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING WITH
I CREASED BOAT REFUGEE FLOW

1. WE SHARE CONCERNS EMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR HAS EXPRESSED
REF A REGARDING BOAT CASE REFUGEE SITUATION.
2. THE HEAVY ARRIVAL RATE OF BOAT REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA AND
THAILAND DURING APRIL WILL INEVITABLY CREATE SERIOUS STRAINS,
THEATENING THE PRESENT POLICIES OF BOTH COUNTRIES PERMITTING
TEMPORARY ASYLUM. WHILE WE CAN HOPE THAT THE MONSOON WEATHER
STARTING IN JUNE WILL RESULT IN A TEMPORARY REDUCTION IN
BOAT ARRIVALS, THE LIKELY PROSPECT IS FOR RESUMPTION OF A
HEAVY INFLUX LATER IN THE YEAR. WE ARE FORTUNATE IN THE
FACE OF THIS BOAT REFUGEE INCREASE THAT THE AUSTRALIANS WILL
BE ACCEPTING AN ADDITIONAL 2000 REFUGEES BETWEN NOW AND JUNE.

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HOWEVER, EVEN WITH THIS AUSTRALIAN EFFORT AND A CON-
TINUING US PROGRAM, WE WILL ALSO HAVE TO SPEED THE RATE
OF MOVEMENT OF BOAT REFUGEES AFTER THEY ARE APPROVED
FOR THE US (SEE PARA 5) IF WE ARE TO HAVE EVEN TEMPORARY
IMPACT ON GROWING BOATCASE REFUGEE POPULATIONS.

3. DESPITE THE IMPENDING BOAT REFUGEE CRISIS, WE MUST NOT

LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE TOTAL INDOCHINESE REFUGEE POPULATION IN UNHCR-SUPPORTED CAMPS IN THAILAND IS OVER 100,000. THERE WAS FORCIBLE REPATRIATIONS FROM NORTH THAILAND TO LAOS AS RECENTLY AS MARCH 27 (REF C). PRESSURES ON PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK TO REVERSE HIS POLICY OF ACCEPTING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES ARE GATHERING STRENGTH. THE NEW U.S. PROGRAM SHOULD OFFER SOME ASSURANCE TO THE THAI OF AN ORDERLY AND SUBSTANTIAL FLOW OF INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEES TO THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT OUR PROGRAM ENCOMPASS A BALANCE BETWEEN BOAT CASES AND LAND REFUGEES TO ENCOURAGE THAI ACCEPTANCE OF REFUGEES COMING ACROSS BORDER. FURTHER WHATEVER HOPES WE HAVE FOR SIGNIFICANT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IS DEPENDENT ON CONTINUING USG ACCEPTANCE OF A GOOD NUMBER OF REFUGEES FROM INLAND CAMPS.

4. ULTIMATELY WE MAY SOON HAVE TO FACE THE INPALATIBLE FACT THAT IN ORDER TO CONTINUE ACCEPTING THE TWO CLASSES OF REFUGEES WHOM WE HAVE BEEN ASSISTING AND FOR WHOM THE NEW PROGRAM IS DESIGNED, THE 25,000 ANNUAL PROJECTION MAY WELL BE TOO LOW -- PARTICULARLY IF WE WISH TO SEE THE RTG MOVE TOWARDS RESETTLEMENT OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN THAILAND. HOWEVER, FOR THE PRESENT, AT A MINIMUM, WE MUST TRY TO SHOW ENOUGH MOVEMENT ON BOTH THE BOAT AND LAND CASES TO MAINTAIN A CONFIDENTIAL

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HOSPITABLE ATTITUDE IN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA TOWARD ASYLUM FOR REFUGEES.

5. REF C MADE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR SPEEDING UP PROCESSING OF BOAT REFUGEES FOR THE U.S. AS A MEANS OF ENCOURAGING CONTINUED HOST GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY TOWARDS NEW ARRIVALS. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THE PRINCIPAL TIME DELAYS ARE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- A. OBTAINING OF SPONSORSHIPS
- B. MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND PARTICULARLY MEDICAL CLEARANCES FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT PASS THE EXAMINATION.
- C. MOVEMENT TO THE CAPITAL AND BOOKING OUT
- D. INABILITY TO CONSIDER FOR 30 DAYS FROM THE TAKING OF THE UN BIO THOSE REFUGEES WITHOUT CLOSE RELATIVES IN THE U.S.
- E. ONLY PERIODIC AVAILABILITY OF INS OFFICERS

6. TO EASE THESE PROBLEMS AND FACILITATE FASTER MOVEMENT, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS, SOME OF WHICH WE ARE EMPLOYING IN THAILAND, AND MANY OF WHICH SHOULD BE APPLICABLE TO PROGRAMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

A. ASSIGN A UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE TO EACH MAJOR BOAT CAMP (ALREADY IN EFFECT IN MALAYSIA, NOT YET IN THAILAND) SO THAT BIO'S MAY BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY ON ARRIVAL.

B. INSTITUTE A CENTRALIZED UNHCR--CONTROLLED CHECK-LIST PROGRAM SIMILAR TO THE BLUE CARD SYSTEM USED IN MALAYSIA.

C. CONDUCT SIMULTANEOUS IMMIGRATION INTERVIEWS, WITH THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION.

D. STATION AN INS OFFICER IN THAILAND FOR COVERAGE OF THAILAND, MALAYSIA, INDONESIA, AND SINGAPORE (UNDER CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSIDERATION).

NOTE BY OC/T: OMISSION REFTELS AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW

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DODE-00 L-03 CA-01 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /069 W

-----007265 031347Z /46

O R 031207Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4074

AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

INS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 12853

MANILA PASS VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY (FOR HOLBROOKE/OAKLEY)

E. CONDUCT MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF APPROVED REFUGEES IN THE CAMPS RATHER THAN IN THE CAPITAL (ALREADY INITIATED IN THAILAND) SO THAT THERE IS NO MEDICAL CLEARANCE DELAY IN THE CAPITAL.

F. MAIL TO ACVA, IN ADVANCE OF INS APPROVAL, BIO-GRAPHIC DATA ON THOSE REFUGEES WHO HAVE AT LEAST A 90 PER CENT CHANCE OF BEING APPROVED. CATEGORY I REFUGEES ARE THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATES (DEPARTMENT SUGGESTION).

G. OPEN A RECEPTION CENTER IN MACAU.

H. ESTABLISH A SPECIAL ICEM UNIT TO EXPEDITE DEPARTURE OF REFUGEES TO THE U.S. (SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WORKED WELL IN THE EPP IN 1976).

7. THERE IS A FINAL PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD HAVE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GREATEST IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE IN CLEARING UP THE BACKLOG OF REFUGEES APPROVED FOR THE U.S. PROGRAM - NAMELY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSIT CENTER IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS WOULD ALLOW THE IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE OF APPROVED REFUGEES AND WOULD THUS BE THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP WE COULD TAKE IN INSURING THAT COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM ACCEPT NEW BOAT REFUGEES IN A CONTINUING BASIS. WE RECOGNIZE THERE ARE DOMESTIC POLITICAL OBSTACLES. BUT GIVEN THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE REFUGEE SITUATION WE BELIEVE WE HAVE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE ALAIN SINCE A RECEPTION CENTER IN THE US WOULD HAVE MORE IMPACT THAN ALL THE OTHER INNOVATIONS COMBINED, BOTH ON REFUGEE MOVEMENT AND POLITICALLY ON THE THAI AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO12853
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780188-0757
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780599/aaaadgtn.tel
Line Count: 209
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e830b2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION HA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2810742
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING WITH INCREASED BOAT REFUGEE FLOW
TAGS: SREF, TH
To: STATE MANILA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e830b2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014